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ABSTRACT

This paper, a research review, looks at the concept of rhetorical sensitivity and how it relates to persuasion. The paper maintains that rhetorical sensitivity and its measures, RHETSEN and RHETSEN 2, (developed in 1980 by Hart, Carlson, and Eadie) attempt to categorize the sensitivity people have for the rhetorical nature of interaction. The paper discusses the theoretical aspects of rhetorical sensitivity and how it fits into the persuasion research paradigm. The inculcation of the established theories of identification, compliance-gaining, and power is also examined. The possibility of advancing the theory and new measures of rhetorical sensitivity into the study of communication, especially in the area of persuasion and influence, is recommended. (One figure is included; 57 references are attached.) (Author/PRA)

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Rhetorical Sensitivity II: The Sequel
Pick or Pan?

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Abstract

This review looks at the concept of rhetorical sensitivity and how it relates to persuasion. Rhetorical sensitivity and its measures, RHETSEN and RHETSEN2, attempt to categorize the sensitivity people have for the rhetorical nature of interaction. This paper discusses the theoretical aspects of rhetorical sensitivity and how it fits into the persuasion research paradigm. The inculcation of the established theories of identification, compliance-gaining, and power, are also examined. The possibility of advancing the theory and new measures of rhetorical sensitivity into the study of communication, especially in the area of persuasion and influence, is recommended.

Rhetorical Sensitivity II-The Sequel:
Pick or Pan?

Introduction

Persuasion research has moved from the traditional approach of linear, unidirectional, and action or issue-centered approach to an expanded view encompassing control, influence, and the cognitive processes (Miller & Burgoon, 1978; Neuliep, 1984). Furthermore, an expanded view of persuasion suggests research "should devote greater attention to persuasive messages aimed at engendering more favorable attitudes toward the communicators themselves" (Burgoon, 1978, p. 36). As a result, the individual differences of communicators have become a salient areas of research in communication, specifically in persuasion. One such construct has been the development of Hart and Burks (1972) concept of "rhetorical sensitivity."

Based on Bitzer's (1970) "rhetorical situation" as well as Gibson's (1966, 1979) framework of social affordances, Roderick Hart and Don Burks (1972) introduced the concept of "rhetorical sensitivity" to the study of human interaction. Although the theoretical framework of rhetorical sensitivity is based in rhetoric, most of the work done up to now has been from the interpersonal perspective (Conrad, 1990b).

Rhetorical sensitivity assumes that when human interaction requires written or verbal persuasion, the circumstance becomes a rhetorical situation. This paper first reviews the current literature on rhetorical sensitivity, traces its roots, discusses

its theoretical framework and then analyzes its measurements. The second part of this paper reviews related concepts in persuasion such as power, identification, compliance gaining and how rhetorical sensitivity can benefit research in the study of persuasion and influence. Finally recommendations for future research will be given.

Tracing The Concept

Although the concept rhetorical sensitivity originated with Hart and Burks (1972), they drew heavily from Bitzer's (1970) earlier work on the rhetorical situation. According to Bitzer,

> a rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or actions as to bring about the significant modification of exigence. (p. 6)

Bitzer's definition of rhetoric appears to be consistent with earlier rhetoricians, such as Perelman (1970) who stated that classic rhetoric is the "the art of speaking well---that is, the art of speaking (or writing) persuasively" (p. 15). Bitzer's rhetorical situation is made up of three characteristics. The first is an "exigence", which is a problem or a barrier which calls for rhetorical communication. Bitzer noted that an exigence that can be modified "only by means other than discourse is not rhetorical."

The second characteristic of a rhetorical situation is an "audience," to whom the persuasion is aimed. An important

adjunct to this characteristic is that a rhetorical audience "consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change" (p 8).

The final characteristic of the rhetorical situation is the "set of constraints," which is the limitations of the communication environment such as beliefs, attitudes and cultural norms (p. 8). Bitzer divided constraints into two main categories: "1) those originated or managed by the rhetor and his method (Aristotle called these 'artistic proofs'), and 2) those other constraints, in the situation which may be operative (Aristotle's 'inartistic proofs')" (p. 8). The ability of a persuader to identify with these constraints will be discussed with identification.

Two more features of Bitzer's rhetorical situation that are worthy of mention are 1) that a rhetorical situation invites a "fitting response." The appropriateness of a response is determined by how sensitive the people involved are to the situation. And 2) that rhetorical situations come into existence and then either "mature or decay" or "mature and persist." "Every rhetorical situation in principle evolves to a propitious moment for the fitting rhetorical response. After this moment, most situations decay" (p. 13). Knowing the "propitious moment" definitely falls in the realm of sensitivity.

Central to the theory of rhetorical sensitivity is Gibson's (1966, 1979) theoretical framework of social affordances. Gibson maintained that the perceptual systems of different species have evolved to the point that they become attuned to the information

relative to their environment necessary to survive.

> Affordances involve conjunctions between the properties of the organism and the environment within which that organism resides. Thus, for the dolphin, the ability to detect high-frequency sonic sounds is an essential property given its environment. For humans, who reside in a conversation-centered world, spontaneous communication is a major social affordance (Buck, 1984), involving the production as well as the reception and interpretation of such messages. (Daly, Vangelsti, & Daughton, 1987, p. 198)

Daly, Vangelsti, and Daughton went on to argue that people differ in their ability to utilize various affordances. People develop degrees of "sensitivity" to social interactions as well as conversation interpretation. Rhetorical sensitivity seeks to bring about an awareness of the persuasive nature of conversation (i.e., rhetorical interaction).

Bitzer's rhetorical situation and Gibson's social affordances laid the foundation for Hart and Burks (1972) to develop the concept of rhetorical sensitivity. This instrumental concept showed that a rhetorically sensitive person facilitates human understanding and promotes social cohesion as he or she (1) tries to accept role-taking as part of the human condition, (2) attempts to avoid stylized behavior, (3) is characteristically willing to undergo the strain of adaptation, (4) seeks to distinguish between all information and information acceptable for communication, and (5) tries to understand that an idea can be rendered in multi-form ways (p. 76).

A rhetorically sensitive person, or as termed later: a *rhetorical sensitive*, is "an undulating, fluctuating entity, always unsure, always guessing, continually weighing" (Hart & Burks, 1972, p. 91). The *rhetorical sensitive* also deals with the values, attitudes, and philosophical predispositions of others, coping with the contingent, and appreciating and dealing with the complexities and inconsistencies in interpersonal communication. Once a person becomes sensitive to the rhetorical nature of human interaction he or she can realistically "grapple" with the problems of rhetorical creation and adaptation so that social cohesion becomes possible (p. 91).

Hart and Burks (1972) drew upon Irvine Goffman's (1967) "interaction-consciousness" to show what level of consciousness rhetorical sensitivity takes place. Hart and Burks (1972) stated that the "interaction consciousness, in the rhetorical sense at least, implies a concern for both the sovereignty of the speaker's position as well as for the constraints placed upon him by the intellectual and attitudinal make-up of the Other" (pp. 84-85). With the development of the *rhetorical sensitive*, Hart and Burks set the stage for two general areas of research: Rhetorical and interpersonal.

The Interpersonal Framework

Darnell and Brockriede (1976) were the first to elaborate on Hart and Burks work when they added to the concept of a *rhetorical sensitive*, the orientations of the *nobel self* and the *rhetorical reflector*. A *nobel self* is depicted as being direct, straightforward, and has an "unwavering dedication to speak the

truth." A *nobel self* pays little attention to rhetorical style. The *rhetorical reflector*, on the other hand, is described as one who mimics others in conversation style, appearing to put others over self, thereby being sensitive to others in a manipulative more than rhetorical manner.

Ward, Bluman, and Dauria (1982) critically defended Hart and Burks' work, contrasting it with the rhetorical theories of Aristotle, Quintilian, and George Campbell. They claimed that Hart and Burks' work "recast" the concept of instrumental communication by "emphasizing relational over pragmatic rhetorical goal-seeking" (p. 189). They also posited that Hart and Burks gave us a new vision of the audience, one that is an "active, individual other, for whom invention and adaptation must include personal and social, as well as logical, considerations" (p. 189). It is that new understanding of the audience which Ward, Bluman, and Dauria say makes the concept of rhetorical sensitivity "more useful than traditional rhetorical conceptions in thinking about informal, interruptive communication" (p. 189).

Persuasion and Rhetorical Sensitivity

Looking at rhetorical sensitivity and persuasive communication behavior, Eadie and Powell (1986) examined the way persuasive strategies were used by individuals who had been identified as rhetorical sensitives, nobel selves, and rhetorical reflectors. Using compliance-gaining strategies from Wiseman and Schenck-Hamlin (1981), Eadie and Powell found strategy selection differences that distinguished the three sensitivity types. Strategies of guilt and allurement distinguished the rhetorical

sensitives from the nobel selves and strategies of altruism and aversive stimulation distinguished rhetorical reflectors form rhetorical sensitives and nobel selves.

Eadie and Powell concluded that rhetorical sensitives appear to make "proactive choices" when approaching persuasive situations where as nobel selves show "little flexibility" in their repertoire of strategies and are can be characterized as being straightforward and direct. The rhetorical reflectors where characterized as being more "reactive" and "tentative" in approaching persuasive situations, using many more qualifier words in their messages. The rhetorical reflectors could be characterized as "wanting to fulfill persuasive objectives through the satisfaction of the needs of the other person" (p. 19).

Two points Eadie and Powell left unresolved in this study were the findings of individuals who identified with more than one orientation and the nature of the "rhetorical ambivalents" who identified with NS and RR simultaneously. Answers to these questions are dealt with later in the Methodology Section of this paper.

The Organizational Perspective

Like other social sciences, leadership and management paradigms often reflect the social society in which they exist. Societal pressures often mold or create an "exigence" which dictate the way business is conducted and the way organizations interact with their employees and publics. Leadership and management paradigms have moved from the stoic, unbending

leadership models to a more dynamic evolving transformational leadership model (Hollander, 1985; Freiberg, 1984; Burns, 1978; Campolo, 1983; Manning, 1981). As Hollander pointed out, "leadership involves a process of *influence* between a leader and followers to attain group, organizational, or societal goals. In informal groups, for example, the leader is commonly considered to be that person who shows the most influence" (p. 487). Freiberg (1984) illustrated how this was to be done by leaders "articulating a set of values in order to fashion institutions and structures that will not only inspire the pursuit of heroism, but establish a framework in which paths for heroic deeds will be created" (p. 32). How this articulation will take place and what words and actions leaders will choose to influence their followers to believe in their vision are not generally discussed in these recent models. Although rhetorical sensitivity does not teach a man or woman what to say, it does bring into focus how sensitive he or she is to the process.

Conrad (1990a) examined the theory of rhetorical sensitivity and tied the characteristics of the rhetorical situation (exigence, audience, and constraints) with the different orientations of communication (*rhetorical sensitive*, *nobel self*, and *rhetorical reflector*) by showing that by employing audience adaptation, and taking into account the constraints of the particular culture, an organizational member may face and solve any particular exigence which may occur in organizational life. The exigence, audience and constraints, thereby, become the persuader's topos (a place from which reasons could be found) and

he or she is much more likely to emerge out of any situation with his or her desired results, not in a manipulative way, but in an "open-heartedness, nonpossessive" way (p. 70). Conrad goes on to point out that communication in organizations is usually rhetorical communication. It takes place within situations which call for actions of certain types, is limited by a complex matrix of constraints, and is addressed to people who may be able to change the organization and the situations faced by its members (pp. 70-71).

With the strong endorsement for the theoretical concept of rhetorical sensitivity and its centrality in interpersonal and organizational communication theory, it would be assumed that a great deal of research was destined to follow, but this has not been the case. To date only a limited amount of research has been done. Part of this absence of research has been attributed to a measure "that is difficult to work with and that perhaps yields dubious results" (Eadie & Powell, 1990).

Measurements: RHETSEN & RHETSEN2

Up until recently RHETSEN (Hart, Carlson, & Eadie 1980) was the only research tool to measure rhetorical sensitivity available. Though difficult to use, several studies were done using this measure, relating encouraging yet confusing results. Since then RHETSEN2, a revised RHETSEN measure, now appears to provide a more reliable, verifiable measure to advance the theoretical concept.

RHETSEN

The RHETSEN scale, developed by Hart, Carlson, and Eadie

(1980) is a forty item scale with Likert-type options measuring rhetorical sensitivity (RS), nobel selves (NS), and the rhetorical reflectors (RR). The options were presented to respondents with each of the different orientations (RS,NS, and RR) being assigned different weighting. The RS orientation, as well as the extreme responses for NS and RR were assigned the highest weighting making RS the "middle ground."

The internal reliability of the RS (.76) and the NS (.80) was acceptable, while the reliability of the RR (.63) was not. Test/retest reliability was significant for all three scales (RS, .84; NS, .87; RR, .84).

Hart, Carlson, and Eadie concluded that the RHETSEN items were not appropriate candidates for factor analysis since twenty six of the items generated scores on two or more scales. They also noted that the RHETSEN scale "taps three complementary perspectives simultaneously" ("how one views the self during communication, how one views others, and how willing one is willing to adapt self to other"), making it a difficult candidate for factor analysis (p. 9).

In a test of 3,023 college students, it was found that RS scores negatively correlated with NS and RR scores and that NS and RR scores were uncorrelated. Hart, Carlson, and Eadie (1980) also found a correlation with a number of measures of social behavior, "although the magnitude of the correlation was not all that we had hoped for" (p. 11).

In this original study Hart, Carlson, and Eadie also found that feelings about encoding messages were related to the various

sociocultural backgrounds of the college students. Rhetorical sensitive persons tended to be white and middle-class, while the typical nobel self appeared more closely aligned to the young, urban, "liberal" easterner. The rhetorical reflectors typified the midwestern, conservative, church-goers. As important as the actual results of this study was the fact that communication researchers now had an instrument whose conceptual origins were endogenous to rhetorical communication as opposed to the other social sciences. The study also emphasized the situational nature of interpersonal phenomena and placed a "premium on suitably complex schemes of rhetorical invention" (p. 21).

In a later study Eadie and Paulson (1984) investigated whether attitude types (rhetorical sensitives, nobel selves, rhetorical reflectives) would be perceived as being more or less competent depending on situational variables. The results showed that nobel selves were rated as being more impression leaving and dominant but only competent in one-up situations. The difference between rhetorical sensitives and rhetorical reflectors was more subtle although rhetorical sensitives were rated as being more dominant than the reflectors and more competent than reflectors and nobel selves in symmetrical situations.

Implications for use of RHETSEN in organizational settings appear relevant, yet studies in this area have been limited and have produced mixed results. Cahn and Shulman (1980) found no relationship between RHETSEN and ratings of leadership effectiveness. Bell and Lui (1982) found relationships between RHETSEN and managerial status and success. Ward (1981) found in

superior-subordinate studies of two manufacturing plants that unionized plant members preferred nobel self supervisors while nonunion plant members preferred rhetorically sensitive supervisors.

Ting-Toomey (1988) examined the construct of rhetorical sensitivity style from a cross-cultural angle. In her study, Ting-Toomey used RHETSEN to verify whether or not members of three different cultures, France, Japan, and the United States, hold different attitudes toward rhetorical sensitivity style. Ting-Toomey found significant differences in attitudes towards rhetorical sensitivity style between the three cultures but in the process discovered that "some rhetorical sensitivity items on the present scale do provide the respondents with a specific type of situation, but others do not" (p. 34). As a result, Ting-Toomey contrasted NS with RR and left out the RS orientation, describing the variance in responses in a broader definition of differences in "rhetorical sensitivity styles."

Conrad (1990b) used RHETSEN to predict interpersonal orientation and selection of communicative strategies in superior-subordinate conflicts. Although it was it was found that high nobel self supervisors chose significantly more self-oriented strategies than low nobel self supervisors, the difference was small and Conrad concluded that the "rhetorical sensitivity construct (even when corrections are made for the ipsativity of the scale) is only marginally related to supervisors' selections of communicative strategies in conflicts" (p. 7).

In summary, two relevant points can be made about the RHETSEN scale: First, that the RHETSEN instrument "tapped a construct not previously dealt with in sociopsychological literature....[The RHETSEN] is one of the few instruments founded exclusively on communication assumptions" (Hart, Carlson, and Eadie, 1980, p. 11). And Second, that RHETSEN is both difficult to work with and produces mixed results. Eadie and Powell (1991), attributed this to the fact that the scoring key is "awkward" to handle, and several items score three different ways which have "led some to suggest that the confounding of the scales was occurring" (p. 4).

RHETSEN2

The problems found with RHETSEN may be solved with the development of RHETSEN2 (Eadie & Powell, 1991). Eadie and Powell took the original RHETSEN measure and simplified it to a thirty item scale, containing ten items for each of the three orientations. The measurement utilizes a five-point Likert scale with one extreme labeled YES! and the other extreme labeled NO! Internal reliability was demonstrated by using Chronbach's alpha coefficient. Results indicated reliabilities as NS = .74, RR = .79, and RS = .84. Factor analysis resulted in the following: "An RS factor that accounted for 16.0% of the total variance, an RR factor that accounted for 9.5% of the total variance, and an NS factor that accounted for 7.9% of the total variance" (Eadie & Powell, 1991, p. 9). The significance that factor analysis could be carried out is salient because it shows that the new scale makes more precise definitions between the different

orientations of RS, NS, and RR since the items do not "generate scores on two or more scales" (Hart, Carlson, & Eadie, 1980, p. 9). It also shows that the new scale takes into account that each person is a RS, NS, and RR simultaneously and that the scale measures what is dominant without a natural bias being built into the scale (i.e., one orientation accounting for a much greater standard deviation than another leading to "naturally" skewed results). The "rhetorical ambivalent" seen in Eadie and Powell (1986) was not seen with the RHETSEN2 thereby leading us to believe that it is probably an artifact of the RHETSEN. Content relationship to the concepts of argumentativeness, communication apprehension, interaction involvement, conversation sensitivity, and the old RHETSEN scale were verified and results indicated predictable levels of association between RHETSEN2 and measures of related concepts.

A final criterion Eadie and Powell claim essential to the validity of RHETSEN2 is the relationship to "real world" activity. This would include the application of RHETSEN2 to people and organizations outside of academia. This criterion was beyond the scope of their study and will have to be proven in subsequent studies.

In conclusion, initial results using RHETSEN2 look promising and appear to solve many of the problems that emerged using RHETSEN, mainly a more reliable scoring system and reworked questions as to make clearer distinctions between each of the three orientations. Yet, whether or not RHETSEN2 will become and important measure in strengthening the theoretical concept of

rhetorical sensitivity will be seen as it is used in future research.

Related Research

Identification

Identification has emerged as a innovative and huristic way to study persuasion in interpersonal and organizational communication (Bullis & Tompkins, 1989; Burke, 1945, 1950; Cheney, 1983a, 1983b; Cheney & Tompkins, 1987; Day, 1960; Kelman, 1960, 1961, 1974; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). The theories of identification and rhetorical sensitivity are notably interrelated and can be seen by looking more closely at Bitzer's (1970) rhetorical situation. One of Bitzer's characteristics of a rhetorical situation is a set of constraints, which he set out as the limitations of the communicative environment such as beliefs, attitudes, images, interests, motives, and cultural norms. Cheney (1983b) provides direction as to how this can be done through the three types of identification strategies: common ground, antithesis, and through the assumed or transcendent "we." Each of these strategies could very well fit into Hart and Burks' (1972) "role-taking" characteristic of a rhetorical sensitive:

> We are asserting here that man is by nature a role-taker and this his most common existential choice is not one of playing or not playing a role but one of selecting among the roles available to him....This does not mean that the rhetor must be all things to all people or that he willingly enters into all rhetorical situations that present themselves. It simply urges us to accept our complexity as a necessary and

> desirable part of the human condition and to realize that a given social contact will necessarily call forth only *part* of our entire rhetorical being. (p. 77)

Role-taking could be in the form of linking oneself with others in an overt manner, such as a manager becoming "one of the guys," or uniting against a common enemy, as in union leaders uniting themselves with union members against "management" in an "us vs. them" mentality. Role-taking could also be manifested in the form of the transcendent "we" in the case where management unites with subordinates against "outsiders." This can be seen where the organization adopts a "we" attitude such as "We value quality as a number one priority."

In human interaction, a person who is sensitive to the persuasive (rhetorical) nature of a problem (an exigence), will be trying to identify his or her ways with the person or group involved. By being able to detect or identify who is rhetorically sensitive and who is not, individuals could make alterations in their persuasive style, thereby increasing their chances of compliance.

In an organization, if management can facilitate a persuasive environment, and get the members of the organization to identify so strongly with the values and beliefs of the organization, the employees would make their decisions based on these values and beliefs and thereby be controlled "unobtrusively" through identification (Bullis & Tompkins, 1989). A synthesis of the theoretical concepts of rhetorical sensitivity and identification provide a convincing argument for this

perspective.

Kelman's contributions, especially in the area of identification have relevant importance because Kelman's (1960, 1961, 1974) identification operates from the sender perspective whereas most all the study of identification has been from the receiver perspective (Bullis & Tompkins, 1989; Cheney 1983a, 1983b; Cheney & Tompkins, (1987). Rhetorical sensitivity is clearly an sender perspective and while it is central to take into account the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the audience or individual to whom a persuasive message is sent, in order for identification and rhetorical sensitivity to support one another empirically, they must come from the same perspective so correlations can be made.

Compliance-gaining

Eadie and Powell's (1986) study of rhetorical sensitivity and persuasive communication behavior is a pivotal study for the rhetorical sensitivity theory because it ties sensitivity in with a current focus of persuasion study: compliance-gaining. Wheeless, Barraclough, & Stewart (1983) define compliance-gaining as "the communicative behavior in which an agent engages so as to elicit from a target some agent-selected behavior" (p. 111). Compliance-gaining research has consisted of the development of various instruments to measure the selection process individuals use in picking persuasive strategies (Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1983; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1982; Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Marwell & Schmitt, 1967; Wiseman & Schenck-Hamlin, 1981). Rhetorical sensitivity fits into the compliance-

gaining research when dealing with the personal factors and individual differences of the message sender. The predisposition of the agent (sender of a compliance-gaining message) has been an important variable in this area of study.

Researchers have found that individuals rating as high Machiavellians tend to use more types of message selections among situations (Roloff & Barnicott, 1978; O'Hair and Cody, 1987). Neuliep (1985) showed that Theory X oriented managers were more likely to use threatening, aversive, and deceitful influence attempts and less likely to use ingratiation and self-esteem type influence strategies. Likewise Lamude and Scudder (1989) found that superiors used influence strategies that were significantly associated with their Type A Behavior style. In related research, Lamude, Daniels, and White (1986) looked at compliance-gaining and locus of control. In this study, it was found that there was a much greater inclination of external locus of control individuals to use coercion and aversive stimulation. Internal locus of control individuals were found to use positive altercasting, debt, and moral appeal more effectively. These studies coincide with what Eadie and Powell (1986) found in their study of rhetorical sensitivity types and compliance-gaining strategy selection discussed earlier in this paper. The triangulation of such constructs lends credibility to the rhetorical sensitivity model as well as expands the focus of the study of persuasion and influence.

Power

Kelman (1961, 1974) outlined how social or interpersonal

power is based on three processes of social influence including compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance, he defined, is when a person is influenced by a group or individual because that person hopes to win a favorable reaction from the other. Kelman's identification is congruent with previously discussed terms in that when a person is influenced through identification that person is adopting behavior from another person or group because that behavior builds a self-defining relationship with the influencing group or individual. Internalization is based on influence targeted towards one's value system. Wheeless, Baraclough, and Stewart (1984) developed three classifications of social or interpersonal power based on Kelman (1961, 1974) French and Raven (1960), Raven (1965), Etzioni (1961), Parsons (1963), and Kelley and Thibaut (1978). These classifications include, "expectancies/ consequences, relationships/identification, and values/ obligations" (Wheeles, et. al.,p. 125). Figure 1 provides an excellent illustration how these power classifications relate to one another and support the basis from which persuasion techniques are drawn. The power construct is not one of small proportions and little is to be gained by an exhaustive review of it, however, the implications to the theoretical framework of rhetorical sensitivity are vital and must be discussed.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Burns (1978) points out that absolute power "objectifies its

victims; it literally turns them into objects" (p. 21). Eadie and Powell (1986) found in their study of message selection and sensitivity styles that "the nobel self tended to use the strategy of guilt as a means of maintaining power in the conversation," whereas the rhetorical sensitive selected strategies that "worked both to maintain face and to preserve the character of the relationship despite any temporal conflict that might occur" (p. 18). From a power perspective, a nobel self would be more likely to turn people into objects by choosing persuasive techniques from one single category, such as the expectancies/consequences category whereas the rhetorical sensitive would be more open to choose from all three categories depending on the situation. The rhetorical reflectors, being more reactive, would not be so conscious in operating from a specific power base but rather choose persuasive techniques that fulfill objectives "through the satisfaction of the needs of the other person" (Eadie & Powell, 1986, p. 19).

In summary, the same types of studies that have been applied to related constructs such as identification, compliance-gaining, and power must be looked at in order to support the rhetorical sensitivity construct. Related research within these three areas can be applied to the rhetorical sensitivity construct and may prove to be huristic in the study of persuasion. A brief discussion of some of them is provided.

Non-verbal Communication

With the strong influence of interpersonal communication it is interesting to note the virtual absence and lack of attention

to non-verbal communication in rhetorical sensitivity research. Since non-verbal communication is such a key component to human interaction and especially persuasion and influence, the absence of it in the rhetorical sensitivity construct makes the study of this theory somewhat limiting. While it is true that rhetoric as defined earlier in this paper is written and verbal persuasion, one cannot ignore nor not account for what is occurring non-verbally in human interaction. Lack of non-verbal accountability would be tantamount to disregarding the visual accounts of an automobile accident, relying only on what all witnesses "heard." Rhetorical sensitivity is not the only persuasion construct void of non-verbal accountability, Compliance-gaining also suffers from the same lack of attention (Wheeles, Baraclough, & Stewart, 1983). The power construct, on the other hand, has had non-verbal communication inculcated into its studies (Anderson & Bowman, 1985; Ellyson & Dovidio, 1985; Harper, 1985; Korda, 1985).

Perhaps what is needed is the evolution of an entirely new construct such as *communication sensitivity*. A *communication sensitive* individual would be all that a rhetorical sensitive is but in addition would be sensitive to the non-verbal aspects of persuasion and influence. A *communicative reflector* and a *nobel self* would then take their respective places at the two polar ends of the sensitivity continuum. Daly, Vangelisti, and Daughton (1988) hinted in this direction with their "conversational sensitivity." Conversational sensitivity meets to some extent the non-verbal hole left by rhetorical

sensitivity, however, it does not elicit attention to the underlying meaning that "communication" does. The term "conversational," in fact, appears even more narrow than "rhetoric."

The narrowness and multiple uses of the term "rhetoric" may also contribute to the lack of non-verbal studies. Some purists might even argue that non-verbal studies would detract from the essence and meaning of "rhetoric" (written or verbal persuasion). The term "rhetoric" has also picked up a negative connotation, especially in the political arena. About the only type of "rhetoric" the public hears about is what the evening newsperson labels as the hollow promises of a politician. While there is certainly a lesser extent of this bias in academia, the notion is so pervasive, it might be no surprise to any of us that outside the speech communication field, "rhetoric" is looked on as a expendable commodity.

While accounting for the non-verbal aspects of persuasion appear momentous, refusing to acknowledge them only weakens the theoretical concept and calls into question a science that refuses to look at a variable because of the difficulty it presents. A synthesis or expanded view of rhetorical sensitivity to include non-verbal communication is certainly warranted.

Outcome Studies

A weaknesses in the compliance-gaining research has a potential to become a weakness in rhetorical sensitivity research. Outcome studies have been largely overlooked in compliance-gaining literature and gives rise to the question,

"What difference in outcomes does message selection or individual difference have?" Some researchers have began looking at outcomes such as Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis (1986) who looked at the relationship of affinity-seeking strategies with subordinate satisfaction. The results revealed that many affinity-seeking strategies were positively associated with subordinate satisfaction. Some non-verbal strategies were evaluated as well. While the implications for both sensitivity and message selection appear obvious, empirical outcome studies would certainly strengthen their position.

Locus of Control

As mentioned earlier, locus of control is tied in closely with compliance-gaining, power, and rhetorical sensitivity. How a person views his or her locus of control may play a role in what type of sensitivity category he or she falls. It would be presumed that internals, who "ascribe control of events to themselves" (Rotter, 1966, p. 482), would operate from the rhetorical sensitive category while externals who "attribute control to outside forces" (p. 482) would operate from the nobel self or rhetorical reflector category.

Locus of control operates from a psychological needs basis. In related research Lamude (1988) found that the exercise of compliance-gaining may operate as a function of need fulfillment. People used message activity to predict existence and relatedness needs (pay, security, promotion). The high use of pro-social and anti-social techniques "may be due to respondent's need to persuade at any cost to satisfy her [/his] existence needs" (p.

169). How these people would fit into the rhetorical sensitivity categories would be heuristic in organizational and interpersonal research.

Relational Variables

Miller (1981) looked at the impact of relationship type, power of the target, and identity of the primary beneficiary of compliance on the likelihood of employing compliance-gaining message selections. Miller found that the "influence of the predicted interaction may involve the nature, rather than the probability of strategy utilization for these techniques" (p. 15). In related research, Miller (1982) found that the probability of employing compliance-gaining strategies decreased as target's power increased in acquaintances of actors where as with targets who were friends, probability of strategy utilization decreased as the power of the target decreased. Miller's work might be helpful in defining personal variables within each of the rhetorical sensitivity categories. Relationship type, power of the target, and identity of the receiver of the persuasive strategy most likely plays a role in whether a person is a rhetorical sensitive, nobel self, or rhetorical reflector. Whether or not a person switches from one category to another depending on situation might be another area of future research. A manager might be a noble self at work where relationships play a small role in interaction with employees but at home turns into a rhetorical sensitive because relationships play a more primary role.

Strategic Ambiguity

Another area of future research might take a closer look at the correlation between rhetorical sensitivity and strategic ambiguity. Eisenberg (1984) found that "people in organizations confront multiple situational requirements, develop multiple and often conflicting goals, and respond with communicative strategies which do not always minimize ambiguity, but are nonetheless effective" (p. 227). Hart and Burks (1972) point out that "it is a rare human association indeed that can thrive without judicious consideration being given to its rhetorical character and to the ideas to be given utterance in the context of that relationship" (p. 87). Strategic ambiguity, like rhetorical sensitivity, is an interactional view of communication and we would expect to see a high degree of correlation between the two constructs.

Conclusion

The theoretical concept of rhetorical sensitivity appears to be a helpful tool in the study of influence and persuasion. It began with promise and then fizzled due to the lack of theoretical backing and the problems of a measure which was difficult to work with and produced mixed results. With the inculcation of the established theories of identification, compliance-gaining, and power, along with the development of a new measure, rhetorical sensitivity now appears at a point well suited to be re-introduced into the study of communication, especially in the area of persuasion and influence.

Figure 1 (Wheeless, Baraclough, and Stewart, 1984).

General Categories/ Mechanisms	French & Raven	Etzioni	Kelman	Parsons	Kelley & Thibaut
Preview Expectancies/ Consequences	Reward Coercive	Coercive Remunerative	Compliance	Inducement Deterrence	Fate Control Behavior Control
Invoke Relationships/ Identification	Expert Referent	Social	Identification		
Summon Values/ Obligations	Legitimate	Pure Normative	Internalization	Persuasion Activation of commitments	

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